

2009 Mid-Atlantic Stream Restoration Conference
Researcher and Practitioner Workgroup: Practical Tools to Further the Science

Wrap Up of Session

Organized by Rich Starr and Will Harman after last 2 meetings

Saw productive conversations, but they only lasted a few minutes
Obvious places where researchers and practitioners can work together
Moderated by Kent Thorton

Objectives of workgroup

Find areas of agreement
Advance science of restoration
Share experiences and data, to move forward faster
Identify where differences exist, and determine what is needed to resolve differences

Introduction

Lots of academic wannabees
Inspiring – shows curiosity is there and a strong willingness to test new ideas
Many people doing science and research, but not all academic

Areas of agreement

1. Streams and rivers throughout the US have been negatively impacted by direct and indirect disturbance
2. Natural stream functions include but are not limited to hydrological, geomorphological, chemical, and biological /ecological functions.
3. Traditional approaches for stabilizing channels (concrete and rip rap) are not as suitable to restoring stream functions as natural stream restoration techniques (*some discussion here about what is restoration, and what is natural stream restoration techniques -- also some discussion that sometimes, steel and concrete are appropriate -- also, discussion regarding the need for restoration vs river engineering*)
4. Competent stream restoration designers require appropriate academic backgrounds, continuing education, and on the job experience.
5. Post-construction monitoring is critical for assessing the success of stream restoration, and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of future projects.
7. Not all stream work leads to restoration.
8. Natural recovery (no action) is a form of restoration – allowing natural recovery to occur. Restoration does not always include dozers and excavators.
9. Need to identify what we are restoring to, when restoration is the goal.

Areas where research is needed

Disconnect –
Practitioners want project-specific answers
Researchers need to develop generalizations and theory – publications
How to resolve? Treat each restoration project as a hypothesis and involve researchers then appropriate

Practitioners want tools that can help identify risk areas

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What are the most critical points for individual projects?
Example: when do we need to pay attention to sediment transport?

Practitioners want tools to help educate clients
Need for pre and post construction monitoring
Why not all sites can be restored
Why project has to extend beyond a fiscal year to be done right

Practitioners want to know how to better link project objectives to design to success criteria

Researchers want to know which questions to ask
Not so interested in project specific projects, but in ideas which would change the paradigm

How to achieve these objectives (breakout groups)

Formal and informal interaction
Practitioners need a tool to help be aware of journal articles
Listserve? Contents service?
Ag extension may be a model
Need a “champion” group – multidisciplinary – ASCE? AEES?
Possibly a “stream restoration” journal
Practitioners include researchers in projects
Practitioners must collect data for monitoring, but can’t write papers
Researchers can write papers – match made in heaven!
Next meeting – session on projects where practitioners and researchers have collaborated
Need clearing house initially for making contact for interest on projects
CVI can be that clearinghouse
Information forthcoming about contacts, e-mail, list serve, etc.